

STATINTL

RICHMOND, VA.
NEWS LEADER

E - 119,238

~~APR 17 1971~~*Keep the Cloak:*

Those who make their living beard-
ing the government, find that one of
their greatest advantages is the un-
ending list of targets available to
them. And because they never regard
any response to their accusations as
satisfactory, the bureaucracy-baiters
revel in a self-perpetuating business.
President Nixon surely knows this
fact of political life, but occasionally
he makes one doubt.

✓ The other day Mr. Nixon allowed
Richard Helms, the director of the
Central Intelligence Agency, to speak
before the American Society of News-
paper Editors. Given that Helms never
has made a similar address in his
five years as director of the CIA, it
was apparent that ~~Mr. Nixon~~, rather
than Helms, wanted to bring a few
things out from the shadows as a
counter to ever-mounting criticism.

So Helms dutifully told the editors
—and by extension, the American
people—that the CIA really isn't fil-
led with bogeymen, but rather with
honorable men seeking to aid the na-
tion's defense. Helms explained that
the CIA has neither the power nor
the inclination to use police-state tac-
tics, and that the Agency is closely
monitored by high-ranking govern-
ment officials who insure that it can't
get out of hand.

Such was the tenor of Helms'
speech, and a reasonable man would
be hard-pressed to argue with it. Un-
fortunately, that is the point: Reason-

able men realize that the CIA is not
about to turn into Nixon's Gestapo;
unreasonable men believe the CIA is
incapable of becoming anything else.
Helms therefore made a speech that
probably changed no minds, but in-
stead brought the CIA what it needs
least—attention.

Mr. Nixon thus handed the anti-
CIA (and anti-Administration) forces
more fodder for their verbal cannon.
✓ New attacks on the CIA were inevit-
able, of course. But there is no reason
why Mr. Nixon should have encourag-
ed them. It would have been far bet-
ter to let Helms keep wearing the
same cloak of near-anonymity he don-
ned five years ago.